



Dearadh agus Nuálaíocht Chliniciúil; Oifig an Príohoifigeach Cliniciúil
Ospidéal Dr. Steevens, D08 W2A8
R: clinicaldesign@hse.ie

Clinical Design & Innovation; Office of the Chief Clinical Officer
Dr Steevens' Hospital, D08 W2A8
E: clinicaldesign@hse.ie

26th October 2021

Deputy Seán Canney, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 49605/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide the resources necessary to employ an additional 100 neurology nurses across the health service in Ireland including nine additional nurses at University College Hospital, Galway; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Canney,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme for Neurology on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Nurse specialists play an important role in triaging, assessing and providing ongoing support to neurological patients. This in turn builds capacity within neurological services and allows for more timely access to efficient, equitable and quality care. The National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCP N) recognises this significant contribution and has strongly advocated for additional nurse specialists as outlined below.

NCP N, in conjunction with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI), completed an all-Ireland survey of neurological services in 2020. This survey highlighted that, although all neurological centres have access to a designated clinical nurse specialist (CNS) and/or advanced nurse practitioner (ANP), the total number of neurology nurse specialists are significantly below what is recommended by International Guidelines and recommendations contained within the National Clinical Programme for Neurology Model of Care (2016)¹. There is also geographical inequity in terms of the distribution of neurology nurse specialists, with the West and Southwest of the country having a lower ratio of nurses per capita. NCP N recognises the need to address this deficit to provide efficient, quality care that can be accessed in a timely and equitable manner.

NCP N submitted a New Service Development Estimates bid for an additional 16 clinical nurse specialists/advanced nurse practitioners in 2022, across different specialties and hospital groups. NCP N is currently awaiting the outcome of the estimates process. If successful, these additional posts will

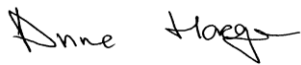
initially address the areas of greatest geographical inequity and the sub-specialities that are most in need of additional nurse specialists.

NCP N recognises the value that skilled and high trained nursing staff add to neurological services. It has endeavoured to endorse this by focusing its current work streams and initiatives around nurse-led clinics, nurse liaison services and outreach programmes. Examples of this include the Headache Programme and Epilepsy Outreach Programme, both funded under the Sláintecare Innovation Fund (SIF). These programmes reconfigure the management of these conditions, enabling clinical nurse specialists and advanced nurse practitioners to lead and coordinate the care of these conditions in the community. This reduces reliance on consultant neurologists and tertiary services, in turn reducing waiting lists, allowing more timely access to services, and improving the overall quality of care.

Finally, NCP continues to engage regularly with patient organisations and NAI to establish ways to promote and advocate for neurology nurse specialists.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Anne Horgan
General Manager

Reference:

¹<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/clinical-strategy-and-programmes/neurology-model-of-care.pdf>